



Energy and Environmental Affairs

EEA Home > \$200,000 in Grants to Improve MA Farm Food Safety

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Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$200,000 in Grants to Improve Massachusetts Farm Food Safety

24 Grants Will Help Commonwealth's Farmers Upgrade Food Safety Operations

BOSTON – December 21, 2016 – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$200,000 in grants to 24 Massachusetts farms to install practices that improve food safety within their operations. The Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program (AFSIP) is a competitive grant program that allows agricultural operations to address food safety upgrades on their farms enabling the operations to meet buyer demands, increase consumption of local food, as well as protect public health by reducing food safety risks.

"Upgrading existing farm infrastructure is important for the Commonwealth's agricultural businesses to maintain high quality, locally produced products in a safe, sustainable way," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "Our administration is committed to ensuring Massachusetts farmers have the tools they need to adopt the best food safety practices for the benefits of all consumers."

"Massachusetts' agricultural communities have a proud history of producing the highest quality goods for consumers across the Commonwealth and beyond our borders," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "The Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program is important tool for local farmers to have the necessary resources to adapt to the ever improving food safety practices."

This round of grant funding has a focus on assisting commercial oyster farmers with meeting the Department of Marine Fisheries and the Department of Public Health (DPH) Vibrio Control Program. *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp) is a human pathogen known to cause foodborne illnesses from the consumption of raw oysters. In an effort to address these foodborne illnesses the Vp Control Plan requires strict harvesting controls for oysters. Examples of awards to aquaculture operations to help meet these requirements include commercial coolers, cold storage, and ice machines all working towards reducing the temperature of oysters at harvest and continued cooling of oysters thereafter.

"Food safety practices are vital to ensuring our citizens have access to the fresh, local food that the Commonwealth's local farmers are known for," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "The Baker-Polito Administration is committed to supporting our local farms through the AFSIP grant program so that they are prepared to provide products grown, harvested and processed here in Massachusetts."

"Assisting farmers through both grants and technical assistance will help modernize their operations and continue to strengthen our local food supply and the agricultural industry," **said Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner John Lebeaux**. "We are committed to the goal of ensuring food safety from farm to table."

The following local farms are receiving grants through the AFSIP program:

Awardee	Municipality	Project Type	Award
Black Squirrel, LLC	Amherst	Box Washer; Sanitizer Injector	\$4,125
Boys in Berries, LLC	Sharon	Water Treatment; Washing Table; Harvest Bins; Light Covers	\$6,311
Carlson Orchards, Inc.	Harvard	Steel Packing Stands	\$2,468
Detail Fish	Provincetown	Ice Machine; Insulated Vat	\$4,424
East Bay Oyster Farm, Inc.	Plymouth	Three (3) Insulated Vats	\$1,069
East Dennis Oyster Farm	Dennis	Ice Machine; Insulated Vat; Refrigeration	\$3,512
Edwards, Simon	Nantucket	Ice Machine	\$3,502
Eva's Garden	Dartmouth	Stainless Steel Tables	\$5,683
Kenney Farm	Concord	Harvest Bins; Refrigeration	\$13,275

Langwater Farm - Stone Soup, LLC	Easton	Fencing	\$20,000
Maple Row Farm	Ashfield	Macrobins	\$15,000
Norwell Farms CSA, Inc.	Norwell	Vegetable Washer; Barrel Washer; Bins	\$9,875
Pilgrim Bobby D's Oyster Farm, Inc.	Plymouth	Ice Machine	\$3,147
Red Fire Farm	Montague	Hand Wash Sinks; Metal Tables; Deer Fencing; Shipping Container	\$9,750
Round Island Shellfish	Fairhaven	Two (2) Insulated Vats	\$863
Souza Family Farm	Rehoboth	Bins; Refrigeration; Shading	\$7,522
Spindrift Oysters, LLC	Westport	Seven (7) Insulated Vats; Shading	\$3,803
The Farmer's Garden	Rehoboth	Washing & Packing Facility	\$20,000
The Kitchen Garden, LLC	Sunderland	Rinse Conveyor; Bagging Table	\$12,684
UMass Student Farming Enterprise	Amherst	Washing & Packing Equipment	\$9,832
Warren's Cove Oyster Co.	Plymouth	Walk-in Cooler	\$20,000
Wellfleet Aquafarm	Wellfleet	Ice Machine; Two (2) Insulated Vats	\$5,436
Wellfleet's Finest Oyster Company	Wellfleet	Ice Machine; Insulated Vat	\$4,657
WIYO	Wellfleet	Ice Machine; (4) Insulated Vats; Walk-in	\$13,062

In addition to commercial oyster farms, produce farms were awarded funds to help with food safety upgrades. These projects include harvest bins, fencing to keep wildlife out of produce fields, refrigeration, and packing/washing room upgrades. Future rounds of funding hope to concentrate on produce operations as they work towards upgrading on-farm infrastructure and equipment.

"I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for these grants in support of our local oyster farms," said **State Senator Vinny deMacedo (R-Plymouth)**. "This funding will play an important role in helping our shellfish producers to maintain and upgrade their infrastructure so that they can continue to produce the world class product our region is known for."

"Aquaculture is a newer major player in Plymouth's marine industry," said **State Representative Mathew Muratore (R-Plymouth)**. "The Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program grants will help Plymouth's oyster farmers provide the safest local products possible for consumers both inside and outside of the Commonwealth."

"The promotion of good food safety practices is critical for our farms in their efforts to build wholesaler and consumer confidence, and MDAR's efforts to support the development of farm food safety infrastructure allow our farms to build that confidence, access greater wholesale opportunities, and increase their farms' viability," said **State Representative Steven Howitt (R-Seekonk)**. "I'm grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration for their leadership in this ever-growing sector of agriculture."

"It's exciting to see that Sharon's Boys in Berries and Rehoboth's Souza Family Farm and The Farmer's Garden would be receiving this grant," said **State Senator Jim Timilty (D-Walpole)**. "Food Safety Operations are vital to our Commonwealth's agricultural businesses and the growing popularity of locally grow food. I look forward to visiting these facilities in the new year to see these grants put to action."

By implementing eligible upgrades the farms will be able to protect public health, sustain public confidence in the food system, meet buyer requirements, and follow new regulations under the Federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

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DAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit DAR's website at www.mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/mdarcommish.

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